

# CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

130 EAST TWENTY-SECOND ST., NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

VOL. XXVI, No. 1

## BULLETIN

JANUARY, 1947

### Why Differentiate Case Loads in the Multiple Function Agency

CALLMAN RAWLEY, *Executive Director*

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis

#### The Process of Learning a Second Function

I had my first exposure to child placement after eight years' experience in family casework. It was in a seminar at which Marian R. Gennaria presented a case, later used in a paper, which now is a landmark in children's work, "Helping the Very Young Child to Participate in Placement."\* I believe I was the only family worker there. I listened to this case in wonder and astonishment. That one could establish a purposive communication with a baby and control and direct it so as to help it through a difficult experience, seemed to me hardly possible. To me a young child had never been other than someone to help parents with or to do something for. Never had I felt any professional experience to be so different from my own. I could no more have done this kind of work than to jump over the moon, and I was very glad that I did not have to try. In the other cases, presented by workers with only one year of placement experience, there was no brilliance or unusual sensitivity, but there was form and precision to a high degree. How could such work be done by beginners, and how could so much happen with so little analytical discussion? I was disturbed and began to question my own practice. It was not until I began to do child placement myself, however, that I understood that the form and precision in the work of these beginners was due to their having understood and learned to apply in every detail of placement the constant and deciding elements in this service.

I continued in family casework for another four years before going into child placement. The thing that struck me first and hardest then was the necessity to be responsible at all times for the whole life of the child. Never to be free of this, never to be able to give anything else precedence over it, filled me with anger and resistance. In spite of everything I could do, the hope welled up in me that nothing would happen to disturb the status quo in the placements and that I might thus escape. The temptation not to look closely into what was happening for fear that it might be beyond me was therefore very great and hard to control. Success seemed to depend on the very things I knew nothing about, the casework relationship to foster parents and young children. I felt as panic-stricken and helpless as a beginner.

I had to learn to bear this anxiety and to discover in myself the impulse to do so much for children and to be so close to them that I was willing to be called on any hour of the working day to deal with emergencies or to find a new foster home. I had to learn to live at peace with the knowledge that the child's growth and well-being were my responsibility. How much had to happen inside me and how long it took before I could apply myself with wholehearted assurance and self-expression to this responsibility and way of relating to a child!

How generic is casework when one has to make such profound changes in one's self in order to

\* Journal of Social Work Process, Vol. III, Pennsylvania School of Social Work, 1939.

#### CONTENTS

	Page
WHY DIFFERENTIATE CASE LOADS IN THE MULTIPLE FUNCTION AGENCY	1
EDITORIAL.....	8
RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND USE OF INTERIM AND EMERGENCY PLACEMENT.....	10
BOARD RATES.....	14
LEAGUE STAFF ACTIVITIES.....	15
BOOK NOTE.....	16

change from one functional responsibility to another? I was not completely oriented to child placement until the end of the first year, and I did not have sufficient control and sureness about most of the details and the process as a whole, and could not begin to use it creatively until the end of the second year.

The change from child placement to family casework responsibilities is no less difficult, as a worker with several years' experience in a good child placement agency bears out. She came to the family agency well recommended, but in family casework there was so little to be done for a client that she felt lost. Here she was, eager and able to take responsibilities and do things, when what was required of her was the opposite. What is avoided in family casework, acting for a client, is one of the characteristics of child placement, the parent turning over, and the agency receiving, responsibility for a child. She felt frightened and bewildered. The new process seemed to be so narrow and so broad at the same time, and so indefinite. She wondered whether she had ever really been a caseworker. Maybe in the children's agency she had just lost herself in doing things and her weaknesses had never come out. She just wasn't doing enough things or seeing enough results or feeling enough certitude to be able to get satisfaction from the job. Maybe she ought to go back to child placement or even give up casework altogether.

#### Differences in Understanding Between the Two Fields

The assumption that learning a second function is a simple matter of learning new procedures which lies behind the undifferentiated form of structure in the multiple function agency appears far-fetched. One has, as a matter of fact, differences even in understanding to reckon with. The behavior of parents, children, and foster parents in the placement experience, for example, cannot be correctly understood from a fund of general knowledge about people, however deep and sensitive that may be. This will not seem strange when one considers that the meaning of an individual's behavior is determined by its purpose in relation to specific forces acting on him. A worker who has not had experience with the forces raised in the placement situation will either misjudge the reactions to them or be at a loss to understand them at all. Often, for example, he cannot correctly understand the specific behavior of a parent because he has no body of experience to relate it to. He does not know the different ways in which parents work out their placement purpose, or he may not under-

stand the specific behavior of a parent, a child, or a foster parent because he cannot relate it to anybody of experience of what is constant and basic in the effect on these three of the realignment of their responsibilities and their relation to each other; or because he has not had enough experience to know in a specific way what they expect of him, or what he injects into the relationship by representing an agency which assumes parental rights. Miss Lauer in her pamphlet, "Generic and Specific Aspects of Case Work in a Merged Agency,"\* has given some good examples of what happens when a worker has only a general knowledge of human behavior to apply in a specific situation. Many workers who have tried to learn a second function could testify how humiliated they have felt over their misjudgments. Their feeling was that they should not have stumbled over what seemed so simple and obvious, when explained to them in terms of the placement forces.

Even the deepest knowledge of personality fails to open all functional doors. Knowledge of personality is not a method of help, and will perform neither family casework nor child placement, although it is an indispensable part of both. It does not give a worker understanding of an individual's feelings, words, or actions *in a specific situation*, yet this is what a worker must always understand and deal with. Only long experience in a given service can do that. For example, all caseworkers have the same general understanding about ambivalence and anxiety, but the ambivalence and the anxiety which the individual expresses in a placement agency is quite different from what he expresses in a family agency. This difference is not only in intensity but in form of expression. The worker's general knowledge about ambivalence and anxiety will not enable him to understand this difference, for the way they are expressed in the placement agency is the result of the specific forces operating there, and not elsewhere. That is why experience with the specific forces is indispensable.

How inevitable it is for the caseworker for example, to be deceived by an adolescent's indifference to separation from a rejecting mother and his apparent eager cheerful impatience for a foster home. The boy seems to be ready for one. After placement, how quickly the disillusionment comes! Apparently the boy was not ready. Why could he not have been sensitive enough to have understood this? But the fault was not in a lack of sensitivity. The fault was in not knowing from experience, or from someone else's

\* Child Welfare League of America, 1942.

experience, why adolescents must conceal their anxiety, their defiance, their sense of injury, their wish to retaliate, and their insecurity in a race to get the placement over with. A worker who has seen how rude and inevitable is the awakening for a boy the moment he has to reckon with the real nature and demands of the foster home will have the conviction to say to him: "I know that you can't really feel the way you say you do." The conviction arrests his frantic rush and makes it possible for him to express how he really feels. It opens the way for real preparation for placement or for a reorientation in plan. But this conviction is not to be drawn from any understanding common to both family and children's work.

The point can be carried further by quoting from an article by Mary Frances Smith, "The Integration of Agency Service in the Placement of Babies":\*

"The first visit to the baby in his foster home often reveals to the mother unsuspected depths in her jealousy and possessiveness; and the introduction of this confusing and somehow hostile element may put into the baby's configuration of life forces a factor which tends to upset or block his natural progress. The foster mother, recognizing the baby's disturbance, aware, too, of the threat which 'the other mother' puts into her own relationship to the baby, yet identifying instinctively with a mother's need to come first, and wanting to show herself generous and above petty jealousies, is caught in a veritable maelstrom of conflicting emotions. Here, if ever, the whole problem in placement is epitomized."

The understanding that is expressed here was drawn from two sources: the knowledge that a mother during the first visit to a foster home might discover unsuspected depths of jealousy and possessiveness in herself, is the common possession of both family and children's agencies—but the cross currents and configuration of forces that is described come from long experience in a children's agency only. This is an example of the quality of supervision which a person with long experience in children's work is capable of giving. The supervision which a person without this experience, though with an equally rich experience in some other function, would be capable of giving to a worker struggling with the problems of placement, would be limited to generalizations common to both functions. Miss Smith, however, is able to give a worker that combination of the general and the specific which makes insight precise. There is no easy road to specific insight nor any road other than in the specific function. It alone, it seems to me, is concrete enough to be usable by workers.

Knowing what is fixed and specific is of course as important in family casework as in child placement.

However, the things that are fixed and specific in the two functions are not the same. Until the worker masters them in her particular field, the lack of the specific to apply to the client's questions and feelings makes the caseworker inadequate and unable to use her generic skill and understanding. The specific will not become a fluent part of her working practice until she has lived through many placement experiences.

### Advantages of Differentiated Structure

Child Placement has built up a considerable literature in the last ten years on the art of helping children "move into placement," and on the study and use of foster homes. A great deal of it is highly specialized and, like the passage from Miss Smith, could have come only from the workshop of daily experience. The present sensitive and precise method of using a temporary home,\* for example, in my opinion, could not have been worked out in an undifferentiated multiple function setting because it required more concentration of thought, effort, and experience in a single functional problem than an undifferentiated setting permits. This, it seems to me, is one of the creative limitations of the undifferentiated structure. Another is that it obscures and blocks the learning of the specific and tries to operate on the general alone. Who is so brash as to claim that home finding and supervision of foster homes are generic casework? In my own case I found it easier to orient myself to a children's institution than to foster homes. In an institution I was not distracted by any likeness to a child's own home. I did not assume that there were things about an institution which I knew already. I knew that I did not know and I set about to learn as much as I could as fast as possible. Had I started to learn foster home work with as clean a slate, I would have learned faster. I would not have been led on by apparent similarities, which always turned out in the end to have aspects of difference which had to be learned. Differentiated structure, therefore, seems to me to be infinitely better suited to teaching the beginning worker in that it makes it possible for him to learn the specific at the same time as the general. It is better suited also to teaching the experienced worker from another field in that it enables him immediately to learn the differences in the new function. It is the differences which stump us from the first and come to us only the hard way. The likenesses become apparent of themselves in time and are not troublesome.

\*The Role of the Baby in the Placement Process. Pamphlet published by Pennsylvania School of Social Work, 1946.

\*An Experimental Use of the Temporary Home. Child Welfare League of America, 1946.



### Special Characteristics of Placement Illustrated in a Case

The following case\* will bring out a few other important characteristics of child placement which have to be learned because of their unlikeness to family work.

Mr. and Mrs. R., a couple in their late twenties, apply for placement of a two-year-old daughter, Marion. A year prior to their application, Mr. R. had been sent to a T.B. sanitarium in Denver for treatment. Four months later Mrs. R. wrote to inform him that she had decided to separate. This prompted him to return to New York six months before the end of his treatment. Since his return six months ago the two had had an unending quarrel; Mrs. R. would not let her husband see Marion unless he shared in the expense of her care, and Mr. R. refused to do this unless he could see Marion and know what he was paying for. He had offered to take Marion but she had declared she could not entrust her child to a man who did not even know how to take responsibility for his own health. She had taken him to the Family Court for support. At this time Mrs. R. was earning \$32.00 a week as an operator, of which \$10.00 went for the care of Marion. No money had been paid by Mr. R. Marion had been in five boarding homes in the last nine months. At the time of the application she was living with a maternal aunt who was willing to keep her for only three days. A few months before, Mrs. R. had applied to the public agency for placement but Mr. R. had refused to sign the application on the grounds that he was willing to take over the responsibility for Marion's care and there was no need for her to be knocked around. The impasse continued until finally in the Family Court he had come to realize that their quarrels and misunderstandings were affecting Marion's welfare. That was when he had decided to apply jointly with his wife.

He looked quite sick in the first interview, but was full of vitality. He said that coming to the agency was a milestone in his life because it represented a new understanding on his part of the effect his misunderstanding with his wife was having on Marion. For nine months he has known that Marion had been exposed to all kinds of hardship and he had shortened his stay at Denver in order to see what he could do about giving Marion adequate care. Apparently his way of doing it wasn't the right way, for his constant fighting with his wife had made it worse for the child. Marion was being knocked around among women who did not know how to take care of their own children and were only interested in the money. He knew that Mrs. R. would again dump Marion. The realization of what they were doing to the child had come to him when, without his wife's knowledge, he had gone to see Marion. For too long he had refused to be reasonable. He had always been against placement in the hope that his wife would tire of supporting Marion and would finally hand her over to him and then (wistfully spoken) by having Marion with him, his wife would come back too. Towards the last he had offered her \$20 a week, and more if necessary, if she would stay at home to take care of the child. But even then she had refused to let him see Marion, and so the plan had fallen through. Now he knew why Mrs. R. did not want to be tied down to the child. She had been going with a married Italian man from the very time when she had written to tell him that she intended to separate. Now he realized that she was through with him. That realization was another reason for his deciding to plan for Marion in the right way. She

\* Carried in the Children's Service Bureau of Brooklyn by Mrs. Ottilie Pink, a worker with placement experience only.

was repeating her former mistakes. Her first child had been illegitimate and was now being cared for by Mrs. R.'s parents. Her second was cared for by its father, now divorced from her. Mr. R. had known about her past, but in his infatuation had felt sure he could make her become more responsible. Apparently he was not the right man for that. Here Mr. R. said, with a grin, how funny it felt to be able to talk so easily and with a kind of indifference about all the things he had not dared to admit to himself a few months ago. Maybe it was that difference which enabled him to see things in their right perspective and to be here discussing plans for Marion which did not involve his relationship to Marion's mother.

The worker then called Mrs. R. into the interview. Before handing over two application forms to them she asked a few questions about the legal status of their marriage. Who considered himself the responsible party in making the application? Mr. R. said that since they were not legally separated and it was his fault that no adequate plans had been made for Marion up to now, he would like this to be a joint action for the welfare of the child. The way he felt about it, it would be good if the agency kept them both in line. The worker said that she was sorry that the agency could not do that. She could consider their application only if they both wanted it and regarded it as a joint responsibility. Mrs. R. broke in to say that she had always wanted it that way, to which Mr. R. said good-naturedly that they had better bury their past mistakes since they both wanted to do better for Marion now. He then asked questions about visiting and made suggestive remarks about "some party" who might take Marion on a wild ride or to visit with people whom he disapproves of. Did he have the right to veto actions which might endanger Marion's life? The worker said that the child's safety would be the agency's responsibility. Mr. R. felt that was wonderful. Mrs. R., who had appeared quite uneasy, suddenly turned around and told her husband that he had no right to accuse her of wanting to endanger Marion's life. "All of a sudden you are so concerned about her, yet you have never paid a nickel for her support." The worker said that it would not be helpful to listen to an argument which was not related to their request for a foster home. Mr. and Mrs. R. apologized and continued to read the application. They asked about visiting, and were willing to visit in whatever way the agency thought best. They agreed next on jointly paying \$50 a month, of which Mr. R. was to pay \$30.00.

He then asked whether it was all right with her if he wrote out the application form. She said it was about time he acted like a father. He signed and immediately handed the form to her to sign. They were both very serious and full of good intentions when they handed the form back. Both made statements that they will assume joint responsibility for doing what is best for Marion. She suddenly wanted to know how the payments were to be made. After some argument about who was going to run after whom, he finally offered to sign the financial agreement and to collect the money from her so that he would be responsible for bringing the check into the office every month. It was apparent, however, that neither one liked this arrangement. The worker therefore said she wondered whether it would not be necessary to put off planning until they had settled their financial differences, possibly in court. Mr. R. said that he realized that the agency was not equipped to arbitrate differences and agreed again to be responsible for the full amount of the financial plan if his wife failed to meet her obligations.

In the second interview Mr. R. announced that he had placed Marion with his sister and felt very happy at having been able to do something for his little girl. The worker asked whether this

might not be a permanent solution for Marion's care. Mr. R. said no because a child as young as Marion would tie his sister down to the house too much and was too big a responsibility. She had, however, promised to help him out for two weeks. Then he began to express some concern about whether foster parents really took good care of children, and how does the agency know. He looked pleased at that part of the worker's answer which indicated that his wife would no longer have a free hand with Marion. The worker commented smilingly that he would not have one either. He considered that remark for a while, then said he was ready to pay the full cost of care, fully aware that his wife would not contribute her share as she had agreed. He went off into a factual but bitter description of her unfitness and came quickly to a realization that he was nursing his own grief and desire for vengeance. The worker then questioned whether, as he said, his irresponsibility was all in the past. Was he not trying to claim greater consideration for himself on the grounds of his having taken over payment for the full cost of care? He had a right to change his mind about wanting a service which gave equal rights to both, but if it was really his conviction that his wife was unfit to have any further contact with Marion he could secure legal custody; until that was settled, the worker would hold up the application.

Mr. R. paced up and down and seemed very distressed. Nothing was said for a long while. He finally sat down again and said that he was all mixed up—he still wanted to punish and hurt her but he realized he could not do it through the agency. Furthermore, he realized that she had a place in Marion's life. It was going to be tough on him to see her enjoy the same rights when she did not carry the same responsibilities. He would try hard to respect her place in Marion's life and her relationship to the agency. For Marion's sake he had even made up his mind that they should have joint custody after the divorce.

The worker then said that she could see that he did not like being reminded about his health, but she had to tell him that she had real question as to how responsible a father he was going to be when he was willing to sign the agreement without knowing whether his health would permit him to work. Mr. R. shifted in his chair uneasily and declared that he was in perfect health, he was allowed to work eight hours a day. When the worker challenged this he said he would let her know tomorrow whether he wanted her to write to Denver for confirmation or whether he would go back to the New York Hospital for an examination. It was painful to him to be reminded of his ill health, he said, but it was also reassuring to see how responsible this agency was in planning for Marion.

In the third interview he faced the fact of his illness more squarely but was in the same impasse about his wife's unfitness. The worker handled it in the same way as before, adding this time that, painful as it was to mention, it would be necessary to have proof prior to placement that Marion's health would not be endangered by him. He felt hurt and unhappy at this but, lowering his head, admitted that he had not been seen by a doctor for seven months and could not be sure about the danger to Marion.

He then sought assurance that in the case of his death Marion would not be returned to her mother. When he learned that there was a chance that Marion would remain under the agency's care, he became almost cheerful and revealed that he had had an overwhelming fear of what would happen to Marion in the event of his sudden death. This was what had made his actions frantic. He was almost sure that his wife would never apply for Marion's discharge. If she did, she might by that time be more adequate, and the child might not be returned to her unless she was. He was still mixed up about her, he said, but could the worker give him a

chance to work that out for himself, provided that Marion would not be disturbed in her adjustment to a foster home and with the understanding that his wife had the same rights as he? All he wanted was to see Marion under the care of responsible people so that he could die in peace. The worker said that right now he was very much alive and they were both convinced of his real sense of responsibility for Marion. She wondered whether he really felt that he could do no more for Marion than try to settle things for the time when he would no longer be here. In his characteristic way of sliding up and down the emotional scale he became cheerful again and said there was something to what she had said. He might try to recover his health. A live responsible father was always good for a child. He left in high spirits and with a feeling of gratefulness, declaring he was going down to the New York Hospital for an examination tomorrow.

In the fourth interview he again sought ways of keeping his wife away from Marion. His way of pressing the point made the worker ask whether he was really as interested in Marion's welfare as he thought he was. He asked angrily why she doubted that. The worker wondered how much he really had Marion's welfare in mind if he was determined to get his vengeance without considering the meaning to Marion of her relation to her mother. Marion had a right to find out for herself what meaning her mother had for her. Mr. R. became very emotional then and said that if his wife were only halfway responsible or decent and could provide the least bit of good influence, he would not want to cut her off completely from Marion's life. He knew what it would mean to Marion and he was really concerned over which was more damaging to her, an irresponsible and careless mother, or no mother at all. He sometimes felt that not even God in his wisdom could find the right answer to his "torture." Sometimes he felt like going out to find some decent people with a sense of responsibility and love for children to whom he could sign Marion over for adoption. He was half dead and his wife was no good. He had real love for Marion and good intentions, but he knew that he would not live long enough to carry them out; whereas she had no intentions at all. Together they made a very inadequate pair of parents. He was so choked up with emotion that he needed time to pull himself together.

The worker asked quietly what next. He said there was a lot about himself which he had not yet found out. He knew now that he had no right to decide for Marion that her mother should not have a place in her life, nor did he have the right to decide for his wife what her relationship to Marion should be. All he knew was that during the six weeks that Marion has been with his sister his wife has not shown the slightest interest in her. When he gave her the address and telephone number her response had been that it was high time he did something for Marion. She had walked out on her two other children and was about to walk out on Marion too. There was not a more sweet and lovable child alive. His sister and brother-in-law were now so crazy about her that they begged him to let her stay with them as long as possible. The worker said she was very glad that there was no longer any immediate need for Marion's placement. With a wide grin he said, "Oh, no, she is very happy where she is. She has come to love me too. If only I had taken things into my own hands after my return from Denver I could have enjoyed all this happiness before." The worker shared his joy and asked whether he still felt that the agency could be of help to him now that Marion was so well taken care of. Mr. R. said that there was no need for placement "for the time being." The worker agreed with him and wondered what he meant by "for the time being." All he would say was that if he could not get assurance that Marion would never be returned to

her mother, he was going to get custody. He had heard that Mrs. R. was interested in a divorce so that she could marry her boy friend. He is almost sure that she would be glad to get rid of Marion once and for all. Marion gave him so much joy now that he felt like fighting to regain his health or at least to live long enough so that he could plan for her future. The worker wished him good luck, and acknowledging that he was withdrawing, she told him she would have to see Mrs. R., too, to find out what her plans were. Mr. R. had a good laugh over this and was willing to bet the worker \$100 that Mrs. R. would not be interested enough even to answer the letter or the telephone call.

As Mr. R. was about to leave in high spirits, he summarized that had he not come here and had the worker not pointed out that the agency could not accept Marion on an emergency basis he would not have been pushed into action and would still be as inactive as before. The worker said that she had not been aware of having forced him to come to the agency. It seemed to her that he had managed quite well and that he was really deriving a great deal of satisfaction from what he had accomplished. He said he was confident now that his confused feelings towards his wife would never again interfere with his feelings for Marion. He might think he was a failure as a husband but that didn't mean that he had to be a failure as a father too.

An appointment letter was then sent to Mrs. R., but she called five days later to cancel her appointment. She said she had heard from her husband that Marion was well taken care of and, after all, that was all she was interested in. No, she had not yet visited, but was planning to do so in the future. She spoke in a carefree and easy tone. When the worker said that she wondered whether Mrs. R. was ready to withdraw from planning for Marion, Mrs. R. said "let him do something for his own child too." There was really no need for her to come down to the office since the child was no longer in need of placement. It was O. K. with her to withdraw the application. Ten days later Mr. R. telephoned to tell the worker that Marion was fine and that he had started court action for custody. He also wanted the worker to know that his health was steadily improving. Not that he really believed he could be completely cured, but for the next few years anyway he will pull through. With a chuckle he then asked whether he would have to have his wife's consent to adoption after custody had gone to him. Not that he wanted to give Marion up for adoption right now, far from it, but before he died he would want to know that she was with people who cared enough for her to want to adopt her.

### Placement Intake Affects "Family Problems"

This intake should be examined to see whether it is true, as it is sometimes said, that a children's worker is so absorbed in the problems of placement that the family problems become secondary and do not receive the disinterested skill and attention in diagnosis and treatment which a family worker would give them.

It is true that the placement worker did not set the treatment of Mr. R. as her goal, or make a diagnosis with treatment of him in view. Her diagnosis was with respect to his potentialities for placement. The family problems, however, were never secondary. They were in every step Mr. and Mrs. R. took together and against each other. They were the deciding factors in the placement.

What the family worker may wonder is why not a finger was raised to question or hold back Mr. and Mrs. R.'s decision to split up, and why nothing was done to try to help them to build a new life together. To understand this, one must understand how much has happened psychologically to parents before they get themselves to apply for placement and what happens when something different is offered to them than what they came for. To practice this, one must have confidence in the capacity of parents to find out for themselves sometimes before they get to us what they want, and be able to keep hands off their discovery.

What had happened, for example, to the R.s prior to their application? Mr. R. had come to two decisions about his wife: one that she was through with him, and the other that he had no power to change her. His hopes and illusions were at an end. The force of her indifference and her unchanging irresponsibility had borne in on him and he had come to terms with them. The pain no longer troubled him enough to make him deny the reality. As his wife left him no outlet for his positive feelings, all he could do was try to retaliate. But he had seen that he could not hurt his wife by this and was trying to use the agency as a new instrument for retaliation. If the impasse had continued and he had not finally realized that he could not "get even," he or she might conceivably have landed in the family agency with the familiar request to make the man pay or the woman behave. But it is no accident that the R.s did *not* go to a family agency and did *not* make such a request. There was not enough left in the relationship to make even that seem worth while. How much less so to begin considering ways of living together again.

All parents, in my opinion, prior to application, like the R.s, have gone through a school of bitter experience in relation to each other. Generally if they ask for placement, it is not because they do not know that family help is also somewhere available. It is because they have concluded that the way to end the intolerable is by placement. The full strength of this previous experience and decision is expressed in the fact that they could not have gotten themselves to a placement agency at all if it had not been greater than the fear and guilt induced by the mere thought of placement. An undifferentiated placement intake in a multiple function agency in which a family worker explores and tries to treat the family problems in an effort to keep the family together brushes aside the meaning of such experience and sets up an obstacle to the fulfillment of the conclusions drawn from their experience and to the way they have



chosen to help themselves. It also increases their guilt and makes them doubt and fear their will. When the true forces in the parents' relationship again become ascendant, the worker will realize that she has only encumbered their progress with impediments.

Without having taken the treatment of the family or any individual in it as her objective, the worker nevertheless helped them reach a solution which might have been also the solution in family service. The solution, along a different route and with certain tools not in the kit of the family caseworker, was the breaking of the deadlock in which Marion was the chief sufferer, the redistribution of relationships to correspond to actual potentialities for parenthood, and the discovery by Mr. R. of an unexpected faculty for fatherhood, responsibility and will to health. Although the service was child-centered in that its purpose was to help the parents free their child from their own intolerable conflict, it could not do this without freeing them also, for it is not possible to introduce change into the relation of parents to a child without also producing change in their own self-organization and relation to each other. Freeing the child, therefore, freed the parents from contention and reprisal; it freed Mrs. R. of the burden of motherhood, for which she had no inclination or capacity, and freed Marion to find a mother elsewhere. It enabled Mr. R. to break loose from his negative feelings and to find a fulfillment of himself in a new relationship with Marion. His evasion of his illness stopped. As Mrs. R. edged out of Marion's life, he moved in, to his great joy and ego-fullness. By this time, in seeking custody he was motivated less by revenge than by his accurate perception of his wife's indifference to Marion, his actual feelings for his child and his desire for her security. He had developed even to the point of leaving room in the scheme of things for a change in his wife's capacity for motherhood. The kind of changes undergone by him occur also in family casework; but the road *he* took was the only one he *could* have taken because placement was the only way out for him.

Child placement *is* treatment. It may not be the way we wish to help a parent, but it is the way the parent wishes to help himself. And any structure in which placement is part of an exploratory process of trying to keep the family together, nullifies the meaning of child placement to the parent and sets up an obstacle to the way he has chosen to help himself.

The concept of child placement as only a tool in treatment assumes that its relation to help for the parent and child is that of a part to a whole. It

amounts to saying that placement is a part of generalized or family casework. But this is not the actual relation between the two. As an experience to parents, child placement has the same kind of wholeness that family casework has; it enables a family to break up; family casework enables it to hold together. To the parent it has a single basic impact, in some ways more whole than the impact of family casework because it is usually more decisive. It has a beginning and an end and a single central theme. It has a set of conditions characteristic to itself. It has different movements within itself which can be understood and handled only in relation to the meaning of the placement experience as a whole. To regard it therefore merely as a tool in treatment — i.e., a part of a larger process — is to regard breaking up one's family as a part of keeping it together.

#### Some Differences in Placement and Family Casework

In placement there are "big guns" not to be found in family casework, which has to rely largely on eliciting internal forces. One such big gun is the power to give or withhold the facility of placement itself, which is necessary for the very way of life the parents seek. The R. case shows that the placement process is the application of a succession of external forces: No, the worker will not accept the application unless they both want placement and can agree on equal terms, unless they stop trying to make the worker arbitrate their differences, unless they stop trying to make the agency keep them both in line, and so on. In spite of the great negative power latent in these exactions, learned from past experience to be essential to good placement, children's workers have been able to turn them into a constructive force in which a parent can test out and develop his capacity for parenthood and reorganize his self around the exigencies and the new reality of separation and placement.

Other differences are these:

In family casework the meaning of a parent's behavior is discussed. In child placement it need not be because the parent is in an experience in which the stakes are so high, the consequences so drastic, and he is so active and his will so deeply involved, that to stop to ponder with him what his behavior means and whether he really means it is to stop the full flow of his experience and to turn him off into defensiveness or rationalization. In child care a parent is held to an iron core of inevitable reality where he had best be allowed to find out his potentialities on the plane of action (the worker did not have to find them for

(Continued on page 9)

## BULLETIN

Published monthly (omitted in July and August) as the official organ of the Child Welfare League of America.

Henrietta L. Gordon, *Editor*

The Bulletin is in large measure a Forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

Annual subscription, \$2.00

Single copies, 20c.

Checks payable to Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

### Will Our People be Literate by 1960?

FOR the first time in the history of the United States it appears that in 1947 the steps necessary may be taken to permit all children to learn to read and write. If the effort be continued for the next decade, possibly by 1960 we will also develop enough adult education to destroy illiteracy among those already old enough to vote.

The 80th Congress probably will provide federal aid to education, somewhat as proposed by Senator Robert A. Taft in a bill resembling that which he sponsored in 1946. Only with equalization of local costs of public school education by means of federal aid can we expect the poorest Negro and white children to have an elementary education. Twenty years from now, and even sooner, it would provide for many a security which dollars alone cannot give, a security essential if men and women are to earn a decent living and become intelligent parents.

It is presumed that, as newly constituted, the House Committee which previously has shelved such legislation will act promptly and that the Senate, too, will give it favorable attention. Hearings are to be expected, but they should not be dominated by the forces which until now have been successful in defeating all federal aid to public schools.

All of us engaged in child welfare work for children of school ages hold evidence of inadequate school attendance and in the course of our activity we observe violations of the laws on child labor and school attendance. If we held evidence of a robbery we would speak clearly in the interests of the person robbed. Now as we see the right to an education snatched from a child we need to testify in our school districts, counties and states. The evidence is needed also by congressmen and senators. Workers in public health do not conceal the pollution which causes an epidemic. It is equally important that from our knowledge of families and children we make clear to those in authority and to the voting public that illiteracy exists and that it is a social scourge.

Some states alone cannot fulfill this elemental function of democracy, the education of all their children. But once federal aid makes it possible it remains for each state to do its part and to take the initiative necessary in planning for the education of all and the appropriation of funds required from state and local governments. It may be assumed that with Negroes obtaining the vote throughout the South the many liberals in the South, and even the conservatives, will deem it essential to educate each Negro child. Apart from preparing them to exercise the franchise allowed by the federal constitution, education will increase the earning power of Negroes, a step essential to the economic and social growth of that part of our country.

The poorer Southern states are not the only ones which need federal aid for education. Montana and other Western states, with large federal reserves within their borders, need a share of what the federal income tax produces from Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and New York, if they are to maintain the standards their citizens desire. Exempt from state and county taxation in Montana is a total area of federal lands about three times the size of Delaware. This is a state which always has done its share in education, illiteracy having been eradicated as a disease of childhood in Montana, in spite of the fact that some school districts contain so little taxable property as to make the operation of a school exceedingly difficult.

The borderline between illiteracy and the meager education provided in many parts of the country also calls for our attention. Schools without teachers or with teachers lacking certification reflect inadequate salaries. This is one of the handicaps which can be removed only by federal aid under the equalization plan which has been a part of bills for federal aid to education.

It will be a decade to remember, if during these years after World War II we create an electorate in keeping with the best traditions of our country. Then when we go to Washington and visit the Jefferson and Lincoln memorials we need not hang our heads.

The time has come when every American after his twenty-first birthday should be able to read his ballot, read the help wanted columns in his newspaper, the simple contracts he signs, the captions in the movie, the Bible, and to sign his name. It is worth all of the energy and dollars required to bring this about.

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK



### Mabbett K. Reckord

To those who counted him a close friend, it is hard to accept the fact that Mabbett K. Reckord is gone. He died suddenly on Christmas Eve in the company of his family and friends.

True to his calling he had served many children, many parents and many foster parents. His concern for them was reflected in persistent and powerful efforts to improve the services which he administered, efforts which sometimes took energy he could ill afford. Some of us who knew him well have seen a valiant disregard of himself as he came quickly back to his desk after an absence owing to ill health. This is not to mark him as one who was an invalid, a role which was not in his nature. He enjoyed life and his joy in living was infectious, whether in the midst of hard work or at recreation.

The children, staff and board members of the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society will feel his loss in ways the rest of us can recognize but cannot measure. To them and his family we can only recall that he was close to us, too, and that the qualities they knew had endeared him to us. In the League's councils his judgment was of great value. He had been a member of the Board of Directors since 1942. He served as chairman of two important committees, having begun work on one only a few weeks before his death.

As we try to get along without him we cannot be complacent. Our deep regard for him can well be expressed as we fortify our efforts to fulfill the mission he left us, the mission to which he was so devoted, the care of the children not only of Illinois but of the United States.

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

### Katharine T. Kirwan

THE death of Katharine T. Kirwan, Executive Secretary of the Maryland Children's Aid Society, on December 6, 1946, has taken from us a friend who was among those who helped develop the Child Welfare League of America.

She shared with many of us assignments which called for service beyond line of duty. The generosity with which she complied with requests was in the best traditions of professional work. Thus she helped to sustain progress in child welfare activities in the United States—through diligent and conscientious response to expressed needs, nationally as well as locally.

Miss Kirwan worked until three days before her death, continuing as long as possible the career of 18 years with the Children's Aid Society. During that time she saw two strong units of the Maryland Children's Aid Society, like young people ready to stand on their own feet, become independent organizations. The roots of their work as well as the strength of the mother society were, in large measure, traceable to her concern and devotion. Children, as well as adults who knew her, will miss her sorely.

HOWARD W. HOPKIRK

### Why Differentiate Case Loads in the Multiple Function Agency

(Continued from page 7)

Mr. R. or explain them). Thus in placement the process can be carried on without a great deal of analytical discussion. Its seeming thinness is only the starkness of the test of direct action to which the parent's problem is put; in contrast, the problem in family service is held in animated suspension. In placement the parent tries to force a change through the external means of plucking out his child. In family service he tries to force a change through the internal means of changing himself or his wife and child. In placement the parent takes the action for changing his situation right in the agency. The worker is a part of that action. In family service the parent takes action for changing himself and takes the action for changing his situation only *after* he leaves the office. The worker is not a part of that later action. In placement the worker is responsible for the external forces released by the parent's application; in family service the worker is responsible only for her use of herself. Placement is always a whole. A parent may use it for only a short time but during that time he has to use it all or nothing. Family service, from this angle, is more partial: a parent may use a little, stop, start, use another bit, etc. Placement has unavoidable consequences. The only consequences of family service are those which the parent brings about by his own capability and effort.

These differences have not passed into general usage because so few have experience in both fields. Those who have not discovered that family casework is also specific often do not want to understand them.

The special skills of child care and family service can be retained in even the small merged agency by differentiating structure and placing their practice and supervision into specialized hands; by not putting workers through the impossible acrobatics of having to learn them both at the same time, and by not making the client suffer through while the worker is trying to learn a generic process which, however desirable it seems in theory, never had any existence outside our impatience with the limitations of practice and our deep urge to help all men with all things.

Eastern Regional Conference will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, February 24, 25, 26, 1947, at the Lord Baltimore Hotel. The Hon. Thomas J. S. Waxter, Director of the Department of Public Welfare of Baltimore, is the General Chairman.

## Responsibility for and Use of Interim and Emergency Placement\*

LEON H. RICHMAN, *Executive Director*  
Bellefaire and Jewish Children's Bureau of Cleveland

THE problem of temporary care of children has existed for some time, but because it has been accentuated during the war, it is beginning to receive the attention it deserves. This paper will concern itself with those children whose need for temporary care does not involve protective detention, and where it is not a part of agency procedure to use temporary foster home placement for all children as part of the separation process.

Throughout the country the scarcity of foster care facilities, institutions as well as foster homes, has led to the adoption of many expedients which are fraught with danger for large numbers of children. Everywhere one encounters glaring inadequacies of plan, program, plant and personnel. Children of all ages, including babies, are crowding detention homes awaiting placement. For instance, one detention home with a capacity of sixty beds is housing 136 dependent children, some of whom have had to sleep two in a bed. The seriousness of the problem may be more appreciated when seen from the point of view of an individual child.

A little girl who has already spent five months in a detention home and is still waiting for placement, drew a picture of a puppy pleading for a home.

The implications are obvious without further comment. Other children are remaining in their own homes which have been declared unfit by courts. Well infants are placed in wards of hospitals. Children are also being placed for temporary care in jails, where separate quarters are provided for them. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that children remain in these temporary placements not for a few days or weeks but months and in some instances for more than a year.

There are two types of temporary placement, emergency and interim. "Emergency Placement" is temporary care of children who are not known to a children's agency and have to be removed from their homes. "Interim Placement" is temporary care of children who are known to a children's agency and are awaiting placement or replacement.†

\* From a paper presented at National Conference of Social Work, Buffalo, New York, May, 1946.

† From a report on "Interim & Emergency Care" by a special committee of the Ohio State Child Welfare Advisory Committee of which the writer was chairman.

The need for emergency care arises from a variety of reasons. Sudden catastrophies in the family may require temporary care of children. In case of serious neglect, children may require immediate protection until long-time placement plans are formulated. Conflict with the law or antisocial behavior may call for emergency placement. Similarly children in placement may require interim care in the course of replacement, when foster homes are unavailable. The reason for change may be inherent in the child, the foster home or institution. An agency may assume responsibility for a child leaving emergency care but, because of lack of a suitable foster home, interim care has to be provided.

Regardless of the reasons, the removal of a child, even for a temporary period, from his own home, or foster home where ties have been established, is a drastic measure and must be done responsibly. The child is deeply affected by sudden change in living arrangements and the state of suspension inherent in temporary care. Anxiety about his ties with the past and the unknown future is acute. When a child comes into placement he gives up the familiar and must begin to form a new set of relationships. This is not a simple process. The kind of care and treatment the child receives at this critical time, may seriously affect his entire development and generally influences the degree of his ultimate adjustment in placement. Temporary care should, therefore, be a carefully planned experience for the child.

### Difficulties in Meeting Need

Temporary care is directly related to and is dependent upon the adequacy of resources for long-time care. That child-care needs have never been satisfactorily met by either private or public agencies requires no elaboration. The country was caught unprepared for the war years and the immediate post-war period which brought with them an increased number of children requiring placement. The following are some of the contributory causes for the increase:

1. Employment of mothers.
2. Breaking up of homes when the fathers went into the service.
3. Psychological instability of the family owing to war and postwar strains.

4. Greater neglect of children.
5. Migration of rural families to the cities and attendant difficulties encountered in adjusting to a different mode of living and different cultural patterns.
6. Sudden catastrophies such as illness and accidents.
7. Increased eviction of families with children.
8. Increase in divorce rate.
9. Fewer relatives offering homes to children needing temporary care because of real limitations, and an apparent trend toward less family and relative responsibility.
10. A tendency in certain communities for those agencies having legal authority to remove children to exercise this authority precipitously, where careful planning by trained personnel might have prevented the need for emergency placement.
11. Improved agency standards and changing social consciousness may contribute to the increased request for services.

At a time when more children needed placement, foster home resources practically dried up. The supply of good foster homes was never adequate to meet the demands. The following factors contributed toward the aggravation of the problem:

1. Lack of personnel to recruit, study and supervise foster homes.
2. Employment of women outside of the home.
3. Housing shortage.
4. Landlords' attitude toward children.
5. Smaller dwelling units in metropolitan areas.
6. Lack of domestic help.
7. Food shortages.
8. Increased earnings.
9. Low board rates in contrast to prevailing wage rates and cost of living.
10. Strains in families owing to war and postwar problems.
11. More careful study of foster homes and higher standards result in lower rate of acceptance of application.
12. Lack of sufficient competent personnel to supervise placements contributes to the loss of foster homes.

Institutions were able to meet only part of the problem of long-time care because of limitations inherent in the institution, and because children who no longer required group care and could have made room for others had no foster homes to which they could be transferred. As far as temporary care is concerned institutions could serve only in a limited way for the following reasons:

1. Inability to absorb temporary placements in the regular program.
2. Limited space.
3. Racial, religious, age and sex restrictions.
4. Lack of staff.
5. Failure to make fullest possible use of available plant resources.
6. Lack of an adequate program to serve children presenting behavior and emotional problems.

#### Current Practices in Providing Temporary Care

In all metropolitan and some non-metropolitan communities the juvenile court which is responsible

for emergency and detention care discharges this responsibility by establishing a detention home, which in most instances provides both emergency and interim care. Because of the lack of suitable temporary facilities social agencies have used the detention home as a dumping ground. It is this group of children rather than the delinquents who remain indefinitely. They are America's forgotten children. A facility planned for children who must be detained cannot meet the needs of children who require temporary care because of dependency or neglect.

Even where the detention home has separate quarters for these children, it cannot provide a genuine homelike atmosphere which children need and to which they have a right. Further, no child in need of temporary care should be subjected to protective custody, which detention implies. Segregation from the community and the "lockup" cannot provide the environment in which the child can gain a sense of interest, support and help. Detention home carries with it the implications of a jail regardless of the social reason for the child's being there. We are punishing children because society has not been willing to meet their needs. All of us stand accused of thwarting children's development and of contributing to their emotional and physical neglect.

#### Some Supplementary Facilities for Temporary Care

Hospitals are used for infants and children under three years of age at a cost of \$4.50 to \$7.00 per day. The length of stay varies from three days to several months. The placement of healthy babies in hospitals exposes them to the danger of cross infection, though sterile with respect to attention and affection which young children require for normal development. With thoughtful planning and willingness to pay a fair board rate a community could meet the needs of young children more adequately and at a lower cost.

In some communities county children's homes and private institutions are used for temporary placements. This coming and going of children is disrupting to the program and disturbing to the children placed for long-time care. The attempt to adapt two such programs complicates administration, confuses function and interferes with satisfactory accomplishment in either long-time or temporary care.

The writer had attempted to absorb children requiring temporary care in the institution which he directs and found that temporary care is complex because of the varied ages, sex and needs of the different children. On the basis of experience a cottage separately staffed was set up for ten babies and preschool children. A staff of three supervisors, one with



nursery school training and experience is responsible for the physical care and the play program. Since three adults are needed for direct supervision of these children, a graduate nurse relieves three days a week when one of the supervisors is off duty. Another staff member is responsible for the cooking and housework. A part-time caseworker is responsible for casework with the families and planning for individual children. The number of personnel required to give adequate care to children ranging in age from 9 months to 5 years is greater than for a group of older children, and, therefore, this plan is expensive. This project supports reports in child welfare literature that young children thrive best under individual rather than group care.

### Subsidized Foster Homes

A variety of types of subsidized foster homes are used throughout the country. Wherever there are detention homes, the subsidized homes are generally used for babies. In rural and in some urban communities, where there are no detention homes, older children are also placed in such homes. The number of children accommodated in individual homes varies from three to fourteen. The subsidy plan\* may assume a variety of forms. The most popular plan has been found to be one where the agency guarantees a fixed number of children, about three or four, at a specified board rate, varying from \$7 to \$10 a week. Usually the rate set for the guaranteed number is higher than for any additional children who may be placed in the homes. Some agencies pay a subsidy of \$50 or \$60 a month in addition to the regular per diem payment for board for the children placed. One non-metropolitan community reports an arrangement similar to the one just described but in addition, the agency provides beds, mattresses and pillows as needed. Occasionally homes are owned and operated by the agency with paid staff. Some of these homes care for interim as well as emergency cases and are set up by private and public child-placement agencies as well as juvenile courts.

Although no two communities are identical with respect to their needs and resources for the care of children, the use of subsidized foster homes was found to be the most successful way of planning for temporary care. Effective service can be rendered by these homes if no more than three or four children are placed in one home. No more than two babies should be placed in the same home if they are to receive the care and affection they require for normal

development. The established standards for foster home selection and supervision apply to subsidized homes as well. The cost for temporary care is higher because the agency must pay for availability. The cost of such care is at least double the cost of regular boarding care.

In rural counties it may be practical for two or three counties to co-operate in the use of subsidized homes or in setting up an agency home and share the expenses on an equitable basis. The county or state child welfare worker could assume the responsibility for foster home finding, placement and supervision.

At times, the function of these homes for temporary care is confused by the placement of children for observation or study. The agency's need to study a child and a child's need for temporary care are different, although often simultaneous problems in the same child. Experience has taught us that the concept of "study" and "treatment" cannot be separated and element of time cannot be predetermined, whereas temporary care implies a fairly definite time limit. In a small community, however, it may be practical for an agency to have only one facility for both interim care and study of children. The dual purpose of such a home should be clear. The foster parents and the staff should be equipped to create an environment conducive to the study and treatment of children.

An emergency facility which has temporary shelter as its primary objective and refers the children to an appropriate agency or placement department for more permanent placement plans should not accept children for study. The two needs should not be confused in community planning for children.

To restate some of the fundamental principles of child welfare and their implications for sound community planning of temporary care:

1. Whenever children are deprived of parental care by reason of dependency or neglect, the community has responsibility to see that adequate care is provided for them either by relatives or an agency.
2. Understanding and treating the problem of dependent and neglected children demand properly trained personnel and the best professional competency the community can secure.
3. Inadequacy of staff, whether in number or training, causes poor child welfare services in family as well as children's agencies and contributes to placements of an emergency character. Greater skill in the selection and supervision of foster homes reduces the need for replacements. Similarly greater skill in working with natural parents reduces emergency placements.
4. Removal of children from their own homes regardless of the inadequacy of these homes, or replacement from a foster home or institution where children have established ties, threatens their security. Therefore, sudden or emergent placement or replacement should be avoided whenever possible.

\* See Temporary Care, BULLETIN, Child Welfare League of America, May, 1945, page 14.

5. Uncertainty and suspense are inherent in temporary placement, and, therefore, emergency or interim placement should be as of short duration as possible consistent with development of a suitable permanent plan.

6. The effectiveness of a temporary placement service depends upon the adequacy of general services and facilities for families and children in the community and the state.

7. The need for temporary care of children cannot be met adequately in any one facility because of differences in age, sex and types of problems presented by individual children.

8. Foster family care is preferable for infants and preschool children.

### Responsibility for Temporary Care

Sound planning for emergency and interim care in any community must be part of a sound program of child care. Whether a child is separated from his parents because of eviction or other social reason he suffers a profound emotional disturbance which can never altogether be compensated. His family should, therefore, be given assistance in every possible way to enable them to meet the child's needs. Such consideration would also eliminate the practice of removing children precipitously from their homes by the police when the lives of children are not in immediate danger. Unqualified personnel are not equipped to evaluate if parental neglect is due to rejection of the child, incompetency or because of personal involvement which is temporarily blinding the parent to the needs of the child.

There is an over-all duty on the part of the public through its governmental units to provide for all children in need of help. In communities where both public and private child welfare agencies exist, mutual determination of the division of responsibility between such agencies is essential. It is recognized that there are certain legitimate needs which the public as a whole do not see as a proper governmental responsibility and which some citizens in the community wish to support through private auspices. Generally, the private agency has a right to select that section of the child-care field in which it wishes to operate and within that field to take only those children it selects. Emergency placement, which refers to children who are not known to a child welfare agency, is therefore a public responsibility.

In many states emergency care now is the responsibility of juvenile courts. The operation of a program for emergency care of children is an administrative rather than a judicial function and, should be under the auspices of an administrative public welfare authority such as a county child welfare board, or city department of welfare. This principle applies to emergency placements requiring detention care as well. The local or county public child welfare agency

and in some regions the state department of public welfare through its child welfare division can administer programs of detention care, leaving to the courts the judicial decision as to the need of children for such care.

Interim care which has previously been defined as temporary placement of children under the care of a children's agency and waiting for placement or replacement, is an integral part of the total placement service, and should be provided by the agency, public or private, having responsibility for any child needing such care. It is essential that each agency have available the necessary facilities to assure continuity of service and to avoid difficulties in intake and supervision.

Regardless of the nature of the program, temporary care, emergency and interim alike, requires the support of facilities for permanent care and should be under the auspices of a child placement agency. The distinct placement features of temporary care as compared with long-time placement must be recognized and that a different approach is required to the child, his parents and the foster parents. To avoid confusion of the two functions a separate caseworker should be assigned whenever possible to children in temporary placement. In large agencies a separate department for temporary care may be required to assure effective service. Appropriate administrative controls must be established in order that temporary placement does not become permanent. The length of stay in temporary care should be no longer than sixty days and preferably thirty days. Adequate provision for low case load is necessary to permit the worker to do a careful job in intake and in working with the child and his parents after placement in temporary care, to facilitate the movement into long-time placement or the return of the child to his home. The worker is the central figure who must be keenly tuned to the feelings of the child in going through this trying period.

In conclusion, the critical problem of temporary care is related to the general inadequacies of child-care services and facilities throughout the country. It is important that the principle of public responsibility for the provision of child-care resources be adopted. To the extent that private agencies do not provide for children the appropriate public agency is legally responsible to establish such temporary and long-time child-care facilities as are necessary to meet the needs of all children.

Emergency care is a public responsibility and interim care is the responsibility of the agency caring for the child. Detention homes are unsuitable facili-

ties for emergency care of dependent and neglected children. Current board rates for long-time and temporary care are inadequate. The validity of a service charge for caring for a child in placement must be accepted for foster parents as it is for institutional personnel.

These recommendations imply immediate increase in child-care facilities and greater expenditures of money. In the long run, in dollars as well as human lives it is too expensive to ignore the need. Dorothy Canfield Fisher says:

"You can interrupt the improving of a road and ten years later go on with it where you left off, but if you interrupt decent care for children and ten years later begin again to feel responsible for them, you can by no means begin where you left off."

It is true that the war situation made the problems of temporary care more acute, but it did not create them. Most of the human problems that create the need for placement are not transitory in character. They may lose something of their extreme urgency but they will persist because they are basic.

### Board Rates

THIS is a preliminary report on the returns to a follow-up inquiry on board rates sent to member agencies some months ago. The material is now being assembled more fully and will be available shortly.

As might have been expected, the need to estimate the rate of board in terms of actual cost of care is being accepted almost universally. Of the 101 agencies that responded to the questionnaire in time to be included in the computations, not one had failed to make some revision since the last inquiry. This is in telling contrast to the replies to the 1941 inquiry when only 16 agencies had granted some increase, 10 were considering doing so soon, and some 27 saw no reason for even considering raising the rate of board.

Another very interesting difference is that while in 1941 there was no common basis for computing the amount paid, today approximately three-fourths of the agencies compute the board rate on the basis of costs of all or some of the basic items of food, rent, gas and light, cleaning and household replacement costs, laundry and miscellaneous items. Fifty-eight agencies compute the rate to include cost for food and rent and gas and light, cleaning and laundry costs, and 75 use the cost of food as a basic item. That actual cost is a basic consideration is revealed in another interesting way. In 1943 it was generally reported that a base rate was paid for children be-

tween the ages of 3 to 12 or 14, that is, for the period beyond infancy and up to adolescence. A higher rate was paid for infants and adolescents because foster parents were more reluctant to care for these children. The trend today is to compute the cost at age levels at which significant differences are acknowledged. It almost appears that there may be no such category as a base rate. How great the feeling is that the board rate must cover at least actual cost is indicated by one of the comments which reads as follows:

"Our present rates are indefensible. The proposed rates represent a great improvement but may be obsolete by the time they are put into effect on January 1, 1947."

Of significance, too, is the fact that while many agencies had previously resisted the inclusion of a rent item on the premise that the family does not increase its rent cost by adding a child to its group, today 63 of the 101 reporting agencies are taking this item into consideration.

There are other very significant details which the full report will reveal but for the present it is of interest to note that the much disputed item, foster mothers' service, is included in the computations of 23 agencies. This is particularly significant because when the question was raised in the first inquiry the response was practically unanimous that services could not be paid for—in truth, should not be paid for. The feeling was that the worth-whileness of a foster mother was in inverse proportion to her interest in being recompensed for boarding children. This recognition of a service fee is in keeping with the growing conviction that foster family placement is a service by the community for various periods of time to parents who need help with rearing their children. It affirms the continued responsibility of parents for the care of their children and the responsibility of the community to make such help available not as an act of charity but as a part of a dignified social welfare program.

It should be noted that in actual practice some recompense for service or "trouble" was made through established variations of the base rate of board paid for children with such conditions as serious behavior disturbances or mental retardation, or physical ailments which made special demands on the home.

Only one agency questioned the validity of payment for service, stating in part that if

"... foster parents should be adequately compensated for their services, in addition to material costs, foster home placement will be a losing plan for the care of children and institutional placement will replace it even for infants. . . ."



This statement was not made irresponsibly. The concern for the placement program is deep and needs to be given serious consideration. While no decision as to what would constitute adequate compensation has as yet been arrived at, and possibly never can be made specifically, we are ready to stand by the premise that foster family care cannot be supported on the basis of its being a cheap service. Furthermore the decision as to whether children shall be placed in institutions as against foster homes can also not be decided on the basis of cost. The community has but one way of deciding whether to support either of these ways of caring for children, and that is, "Do they meet the needs of the children for whom care is being sought?"

Competition with independent boarding homes, that is, boarding care arranged for parents independent of agency service, has raised another question, whether foster parents should be paid an amount over and above the agency rate for children whose parents can afford to do so. Only three agencies reported this practice. This is by no means a simple question. Involved are such considerations as, what differences in treatment of parents and children that might introduce, how one would decide which foster parent is to be offered this privilege and, of course, just what per cent of his salary a parent is to be expected to pay. It may well be that as the rate of board for all children becomes more acceptable in terms of the service expected, this question will assume minor importance as it does generally in relation to other services.

H. L. G.

### League Staff Activities

Miss Margaret Reeves, as in previous years, has carried special responsibilities in the field of public welfare service to children. She has worked extensively also with private agencies.

Not as much time has been available for service in the field in 1946 as in some previous years. With a staff very inadequate in number for the tremendous task needing to be done and being attempted by the League, each member of the professional staff has endeavored to help in every way possible to further the League's total program. This has meant that a considerable part of Miss Reeves' time has been spent on activities not directly a part of field service.

Field service was given in fifteen states in 1946. Four states have been reached twice. The return to these states was for the purpose of membership studies or second visits to provisionals of the League. The fifteen states visited in 1946 are representative

of all parts of the country (four in the northeastern section, four in the central area, three in the deep South, one in the Southwest, one in the Rocky Mountain area and two on the Pacific coast).

When in the field, in addition to making field visits to members, a considerable amount of time is given to consultation on questions of community-wide and state-wide planning for children and matters of child welfare legislation. These activities are at the request of state welfare departments or other member agencies of the League, councils of social agencies, and other planning groups (with clearance with our members). Some time also is given to conferences, upon request, with executives and board members of prospective applicants for League membership.

In field visits Miss Reeves has found recently a few agencies with a full professional staff for the first time in years. In some places there are difficulties in respect to financing agencies. There is widespread interest in child welfare legislation, community planning for meeting the needs of children, relationships of public and private agency services, relationships of service for families and for children, facilities for short-time care of children (including emergency care, interim care, so-called temporary care and detention care), adoption practices, home-finding techniques.

Activities so far in 1946 other than indicated above have included:

1. Much correspondence, some of which is informational in character but some of which is much more than that. Frequently this correspondence, some of which must be handled while on field trips, relates to legislation, public welfare organization for service to children, and community planning.
2. Interviews and correspondence regarding personnel for children's agencies.
3. Office interviews with representatives of agencies and communities.
4. Participation as a child welfare "consultant" to a survey staff in New Orleans.
5. Conferences and correspondence as a "consultant" for a project concerned with child welfare legislation in Colorado.
6. Work in respect to two national committees of American Association of Social Workers involving a possible national examining unit for social work and social work salaries.
7. Carrying, to a degree, responsibility for the League's relationships with the American Legion and with the American Public Welfare Association, including attendance at one meeting of each of those organizations so far in 1946.
8. Attendance at, and participation in, League conferences and meetings. These included the League's first meeting of state child welfare directors (from state agencies in our membership in northern and western states) at Granville, Ohio, which Miss Reeves helped to plan.
9. Attendance at other special meetings, as one session of the National Commission on Children and Youth.

Mrs. Henrietta L. Gordon edits the League's BULLETIN and other publications and is in charge of the information service.

However, demand for her time in other activities made it necessary for her to spend a total of about two months on other assignments outside New York City. Two agencies were studied for membership. Three member agencies received field visits and she addressed the annual board meetings of three members. She presented papers at several conferences and at a school of social work. The institutes she conducted included three under the auspices of councils of social agencies.

Visits to the League's offices by members, non-members, guests from other countries or special writers seeking material for news or magazine stories are handled by all members of the staff, especially when the inquiries are within the areas of their special skills, but Mrs. Gordon handles more of these appointments than any other member of the staff, unless it be the Executive Director. She accounted for 29 agency representatives interviewed at the League's office, one being from Hawaii, one from China and one from Greece. Many problems pertaining to administration were given attention.

Important special assignments include representation of the League at the Attorney General's Conference on Juvenile Delinquency, to which Mrs. Gordon gave considerable attention during the summer months, at sessions on the statistical project sponsored by the Community Chests and Councils (formerly by the U. S. Children's Bureau), and on the Child Care Section of the National Conference of Social Work. She has consulted with the Community Chests and Councils on radio programs and press releases.

A responsibility continued from previous years is the supervision for the League of its case record exhibit. This includes a great deal of work organizing the national committee and the local committees through which the exhibit is assembled. It means heavy correspondence both in preparing the exhibit and in scheduling its use by member agencies, schools of social work, and councils of social agencies.

Mrs. Gordon represents the League on the Social Case Work Council and now serves as its chairman. Under her leadership the Council has developed several important projects, including an examination into use of volunteers by casework agencies, caseworkers' responsibility for interpretation of agency's services, the use of social service exchange.

Six pamphlets have been published in 1946: Child Welfare Bibliography Supplement No. 2; The Day

Care of Little Children in a Big City; Daytime Care: A Partnership of Three Professions; A Manual for the Beginning Worker in a Day Nursery; An Experimental Use of the Temporary Home; and An Experimental Study of Case Loads in Child Welfare Agencies.

The information service has met steadily increasing demands. One hundred inquiries have been on various aspects of foster home care. Problems on adoption, casework recording and administration also were recurrent among the requests for information. On the basis of some of these requests a committee is at present studying forms and process of accepting and studying applications for agency service. The findings will be discussed in the BULLETIN.

### BOOK NOTE

GROUP WORK AND THE CHILD CARING INSTITUTION, by Saul Bernstein. Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. New York, 1946.

This is a series of lectures for institutional personnel under the auspices of The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies by Mr. Saul Bernstein, then associated with the New York School of Social Work and now on the faculty of the Boston University School of Social Work. In Mr. Bernstein's own words

"This pamphlet is an attempt to begin the process of applying to institutional life what group work has learned—mainly in leisure time agencies. It should be stated that my experience with institutions has been limited and that my competence is rather in group work. It is hoped that readers who work in institutions will help by making applications and supplying illustrations of the concepts presented.

"There are many places in this pamphlet where I would like to see expansion and further illustrations. Space limitations, however, make this impossible. I am ready to accept this situation because of the hope that as the gap between institutions and group work becomes smaller, each subject included in this pamphlet—and others—will be given fuller and more specific treatment in future publications."

The six chapters include discussions of Group life and the Institution; The Institution as a Community; Group Life in the Cottage; Groupings and the Recreation Program; The representative Council in the Institution.

This pamphlet should be a useful guide to institution personnel. It is available through the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, 122 East 22nd Street, New York 10.